

## *Full Length Research Paper*

# Effect of Cultural Factors on Inclusive Education Policy Implementation in Primary Schools in Namutumba District

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**ABSTRACT:** The goal of this study was to document the impact of collaborative teaching, cultural variables, and social factors on the implementation of inclusive education policies. This study had three goals: to determine the impact of collaborative teaching on inclusive education policy implementation, to determine the impact of cultural factors on inclusive education policy implementation, and to determine the impact of social factors on inclusive education policy implementation. Responses from teachers, head teachers, and SMCs were collected using a sample size of 473. The questionnaire was self-administered. The mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that cultural influences have a statistically significant influence on the implementation of inclusive education policies. The study also discovered that social factors have a statistically significant influence on the adoption of inclusive education policies. To summarize, strong leadership is required to make inclusive practices a reality in schools. These leaders must understand what inclusive practices involve and how to organize personnel to effectively execute those practices. A coordinated effort between the community, parents, and the school is also required to ensure that learners with disabilities do not face any sort of prejudice at any cost. This will allow them to live a more positive life and achieve greater academic success.

**Keywords:** Collaborative teaching, Cultural values, social factors, inclusive education

## INTRODUCTION

When children with and without impairments participate and study in the same classes, this is referred to as inclusive education. According to research, one of the reasons for establishing inclusive education is that students with disabilities used to attend separate schools in traditional societies. As a result, people were accustomed to the notion that special education entailed segregation. However, as time passed, society began to see that when children are educated together, great academic and social outcomes for all occur (Habla, 2016).

The history of inclusive education may be traced back to the 1950s community living movement in Ottawa, which sought to disprove the notion that children with developmental problems could not learn. Parents with children with developmental disabilities, realizing their

children's ability to learn and thrive, responded by establishing their own schools in places such as church basements and private homes (Manejers, 2015). In the United States of America, inclusive education began in the 1970s with the passage of the Education for All Children Act, also known as Public Law 94-142, which mandated that all children be educated in the "least restrictive environment" so that those with disabilities could learn alongside their peers without disabilities (Kerrison, 2015). In Europe, inclusive education began in 1996 with the establishment of the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, whose aim is to assist the thirty member nations in improving the quality and effectiveness of their inclusive services for all learners.

All European countries have pledged to move toward

more inclusive education systems. They do so in various ways, based on their past, present, and historical situations. Inclusive education systems are viewed as a critical component within the larger aim of more socially inclusive society, which all countries share, both ethically and politically (Margraner and Meigier, 2016).

The Namutumba district was chosen for this study because it is located in the Busoga region, where inclusive education is prioritized. Furthermore, it is one of the areas in Uganda where, despite the support provided by numerous stakeholders, the implementation of Inclusive Education policy in respective schools leaves much to be desired.

Cultural elements, social factors, and how teachers engage with students with disabilities have all received a lot of attention as major concerns influencing the implementation of inclusive education policies. Knowing the impact of each of these three factors in school and attending to weak areas helps to improve the implementation of inclusive education, a policy that is becoming increasingly relevant in the Namutumba district. Cultural elements, social factors, and teachers' teaching approaches are thought to be the key correlates of inclusive education that influence policy implementation.

According to the findings of this study, the three correlations are to blame for the inefficient implementation of the inclusive education policy, and they merit further investigation. Furthermore, these countries have diverse social settings and approaches for implementing inclusive education that may not be comparable to Uganda's circumstances. As a result, the purpose of this study was to document the impact of correlates of inclusive education policy implementation, with a focus on collaborative teaching, cultural, and social aspects.

## Literature review

Cultural influence can be found in a variety of contexts, ranging from the intimate home milieu to wider social settings within ecological systems. It directs one's implicit thoughts and feelings as well as one's explicit acts in a social engagement (Lindsey et al., 2015). Cultural influence is illustrated in this study by how preferences differ among students from various cultures. The environment in which students with disabilities reside differs significantly from that in which their able-bodied colleagues reside, and this continues to influence their choices as decided by elements surrounding them.

Culture-related values that are reflected in the quality of sibling relationships. People who place a high importance on collective identity and group identification tend to have strong, close sibling relationships. Siblings' everyday lives are highly entwined in Latino cultures, for example, where sibling caretaking and friendship are routines, in contrast to European American kids, who report higher degrees of

camaraderie with their peers than with their siblings (Cooper and Christie, 2015).

In this study, the feature of sibling connection simply indicates that students who grow up in families where they are nourished with a sense of cooperation with brothers and sisters explain why certain students want to be joined with peers while at school. Students who grow up in households with one or two children, on the other hand, appear to be in a solitary mood all the time, and putting such students into groups requires too much teacher attention.

Sibling relationships are less interdependent in societies that respect the autonomy of the individual kid, and siblings tend to compete for their parents' attention. Parents frequently want to encourage individual identity and achievement, to treat siblings "equally and equitably," and to keep siblings from becoming "overburdened" by one another's care (Brude, 2020). Simply put, in the context of Uganda, it is recommended that parents raise their children with a sense of community. This is because many able-bodied students at inclusive schools believe it is a curse because their peers with disabilities are cursed.

Aside from the family environment, a study on the effect of culture on inclusive education was conducted, and the findings suggested that the existence of four broad school cultural features and practices, including staff understanding of special and inclusive education concepts, leadership and organization, school cultural features/practices and implications for staff, and policies, caused teachers and school administrators to have limited knowledge and understanding of curriculum. However, inclusive practices were only marginally influenced by school leadership, collaboration, and inspection processes (Angrist and Lavy, 2021).

Inclusive school leadership is also a cultural factor that has a substantial impact on the implementation of inclusive education policies: Culture and leadership, according to Sergiovanni (2001), are two sides of the same coin in that leaders first build cultures when they form groups and organizations. According to Hargreaves and Hopkins (2005), leadership is a crucial requirement for school improvement, and one of the most important parts of school culture improvement is the quality of the school's leadership.

As a result, when one child with a disability receives extra attention and care from his or her parents due to his or her special requirements, the impact on the child's siblings varies depending on culture. Because of the role they may play in effective intervention for the child with special needs, the backdrop of cultural ideas and expectations for sibling companionship and intimacy should be examined when assessing family problems and needs (Anderson and Minke, 2017).

In families with strong individual values, involving siblings in special needs planning may help to develop a sense of identity and recognized value within the entire

family system. Siblings, regardless of cultural variations, are crucial role models who can have a positive or bad impact on the child with special needs (McCormick, 2016).

Although Mitchell (1999) suggested that the physical environment and school climate are the most significant barriers to full inclusion, the school environment is seen as part of a larger school culture. According to Polloway et al. (2004), for children with disabilities to have the best learning opportunities possible, a typical inclusive school environment must be designed in such a way that they have easy access to classrooms, resource rooms, playing fields, and, of course, the restrooms and the library.

Peer attitudes, intentions, and behaviors toward peers with disabilities are critical to their mutual coexistence and development. Another aspect that determines a person's attitude toward a certain action is a person's perceived subjective control over that behavior (Brady and Tsay, 2010). According to the literature, how simple or difficult it is for an individual to adopt a given behavior is referred to as "perceived behavioral control." Internal and external factors influence perceived behavioral control.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research design**

A descriptive and Correlation design was used to conduct this study. According to the Kowalczyk (2010), this type of research design is a test under controlled conditions made to demonstrate a known truth, examine the validity of hypothesis or to determine the efficiency of something previously untried. Prior to this interpretation, available studies have tried to explore much about teaching methods, school environment and other related factors affecting education but the aspect of inclusive education still lacks a lot of information in the publications. A research paradigm involving use of mainly quantitative approach was used. Among the strengths of this paradigm are; complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses, superior evidence for the results since a mixture of methods can result into generation of similar findings.

### **Study population**

The study population was obtained from five Sub Counties of Namutumba district with various numbers of schools as indicated in (Table 1).

### **Determination of sample size**

The sample size using Yamane (1978) formula was 473.

### **Sampling techniques**

**Purposive sampling:** It is important for this study because it is used to select a population whose findings can be generalized.

In this study, headteachers were included directly as heads of schools whose findings contain responses about the entire school environment. They know more than teachers and their responses can be used to back-up those from teachers thus the phenomenon of generalization.

The main advantage of purposive sampling is that a researcher can reach a targeted sample quickly and it is easy to get a sample of subjects with specific characteristics. Additionally, researchers can draw on a wide range of qualitative research designs.

### **Cluster sampling**

In most cases, the commonest form of cluster sampling is area sampling used to consider the study area by sub-sects based on common characteristics. In the context of this study, government aided primary schools are targeted. All primary schools in Namutumba district were clustered into private and public and only public schools were selected.

This sampling approach has been used because Namutumba district consists of both private and public primary but the aspect of Inclusive Education is mainly an aspect of public or government schools.

### **Stratified sampling**

This approach involves consideration of the study population by common characteristics. The study population is divided into subgroups called strata. Whereas cluster sampling was used to consider the study population by type of school, stratified sampling was used to categorize the study population into males and females. This applied to teachers, School management Committee Members (SMCs) and head teachers. It was done to avoid being gender biased during distribution of tools for data collection.

### **Simple random sampling**

This was used for selecting individual respondents from each stratum. As the most used sampling technique, it is necessary for this study because it is normally free from errors in classification, it is suitable for the use of inferential statistics given the fact that this study has a quantitative part, and it is free from bias and prejudice. The study used SRS to select each pupil after considering the aspect of gender. Random sampling eliminates bias by giving all individuals an equal chance to be chosen.

**Table 1: Study population by category.**

Sub County	No. of schools	Teachers	Head teachers	SMCs
Kibale S/C	8	104	8	96
Namutumba	6	78	6	72
Mazuba	3	39	3	36
Nangonde	9	117	9	108
Nabweyo	9	117	9	108
Totals	35	455 = (N <sub>1</sub> )	35 = (N <sub>2</sub> )	420 = (N <sub>3</sub> )

Source: DEO's office documents

**Table 2: Reliability results according to Cronbach Alpha**

Variable	No. of items	Coefficient	Percentage (%age)
Inclusive Education Policy	7	0.906	90.6
Collaborative teaching	20	0.726	72.6
Cultural factors	12	0.812	81.2

Source: primary data from Namutumba primary schools, March 2017

### Data collection instruments

The study was conducted using a questionnaire. A questionnaire was chosen for its practical nature, wide coverage of many people in short period of time and results are easily quantified and presented. A questionnaire was used to obtain findings from teachers.

### Validity

Validity was ensured by carefully selecting questions for questionnaires respectively. The questions set were discussed with experts to ensure that all concerned the main objectives and hence could handle each study area without leaving out necessary information. Validity of a study was important because if the results were not valid, then the study would be meaningless. If it did not measure what the study intended, then results could not be used to answer the research question, which is the main aim of the study.

### Reliability

Reliability was run because it addresses the overall consistency of a research study's measure. If a research instrument, for example a survey or questionnaire, produces similar results under consistently applied conditions, it lessens the chance that the obtained scores are due to randomly occurring factors, like seasonality or current events, and measurement error. Results from the reliability analysis were as indicated in (Table 2). The Cronbach Alpha coefficients obtained as indicated in (Table 2) show that the content used to measure correlates of inclusive education policy implementation had reliability scales meeting the required coefficient of 0.70 or 70%. Inclusive education policy items were 7 and measured up to a reliability scale of 0.906, translating into a reliability score of 90.6%. On the other hand,

collaborative teaching was underlined by a Cronbach coefficient of 0.726, which is translated into 72.6%. In addition, the content for Cultural factors consisted of 12 items, whose reliability scale as per Cronbach coefficients was 0.812, translating into 81.2%.

### Data analysis

The collected data were coded, grouped thematically for easy analysis and reporting. Data were analyzed statistically by use of SPSS and reported by the help of Tables. The background information of respondents was analyzed using frequencies and percentages. Further, the significance of the background information to the correlates of inclusive education was tested using Chi square statistics indicating degrees of freedom (df) and probability value (P-value) significant at  $p < .01$ . The average Mean values and standard deviations were used to establish factors which explained collaborative teaching as a correlate of inclusive education policy implementation. On the other hand, regression coefficients were used to determine the influence of each correlate of inclusive education policy implementation at  $p < .05$ . Analysis of Variance coefficients were used to establish the extent to which each of the correlates influenced inclusive education.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 3 shows a summary of findings obtained in relation to the six characteristics explaining background information of respondents. Table 3 shows frequency and percentage distributions for each of the characteristics of the background information of respondents.

**Table 3:** Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age category</b>		
20-29	40	9.1
30-39	109	24.9
40-49	165	37.7
<b>Period of service</b>		
1-5 years	36	8.2
6-10 years	185	42.2
More than 10 years	217	49.5
<b>Nature of disability</b>		
Visual impairment	155	35.4
Hearing impairment	141	32.2
Physical impairment	134	30.6
Other	8	1.8
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	323	73.7
Female	115	26.3
<b>Responsibility towards the one with disability</b>		
Counselor at school	155	35.4
Mere teacher	231	52.7
Relative	52	11.9

Source: primary data from Namutumba primary schools, March 2017

### Age of respondents

The study examined age distribution of respondents with the purpose of ensuring that all respondents were mature and reasonable enough to participate in the study. Results on age-brackets in the above table revealed that the highest number of respondents was in the age-bracket of 40-49 (37.7%), followed by those in the age bracket of 30-39 (24.9%) and 20-29(9.1%). These findings imply that all respondents were in active age-group and could interpret questionnaires well without any bias thus improving the reliability of findings.

### Period of service

The study also examined period of service to enrich findings by generating mixed views from teachers who had been in service for a short time and those who had been serving in inclusive education for quite a long period of time. The period of service was measured using a minimum of 1 year and a maximum of 10 years and above. Findings in (Table 3) show that the highest percentage (49.5%) of the respondents had served as teachers in inclusive education for a period exceeding ten (10) years. Others (42.2%) had served for a period of 6 to 10 years, and the least percentage (8.2%) had served for a period from 1 year to 5 years. Therefore, the data obtained was from experienced people who knew the requirements of the inclusive education policy and factors related to its implementation other the years thus increasing on the reliability of findings.

### Nature of disability

This was investigated for two reasons: one was to enable readers acknowledge the various kinds of disabilities existing in primary schools where the inclusive education policy is operational. Second was to make relationships on how various disabilities are handled in these schools. Based on findings in (Table 3), 35.5% of the respondents reported that visual impairment was the commonest disability followed by hearing impairment which has a percentage representation of 32.2%, physical impairment with a percentage representation of 30.6% and the other categories of disability were represented by 30.6%.

### Gender of respondents

Statistical data from (Table 3) indicates that there were 323 male respondents representing 73.7% compared to 115 female respondents representing 26.3%. This significant difference in gender distribution can be attributed to the fact that there was recruitment of more males than female teachers.

### Responsibility towards the one with disability

Many parents feel comfortable when they entrust their children who have disabilities, with teachers in school. Consequently, there was need to investigate about the roles of teachers as per this establishment. Table 3 shows that 52.7% of the respondents were just mere



**Table 4:** Cultural factors and inclusive education policy implementation

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.857	0.135		21.194	0.000
	CF1	0.207	0.058	.353	3.558	0.000
	CF2	0.158	0.059	0.285	2.701	0.007
	CF3	0.179	0.063	0.384	2.862	0.004
	CF4	0.066	0.060	0.117	1.102	0.271
	CF5	-0.014	0.048	-0.028	-.292	0.771
	CF6	0.107	0.059	0.214	1.828	0.068
	CF7	0.091	0.059	0.149	1.540	0.124
	CF9	0.377	0.072	0.755	5.244	0.000
	CF10	0.103	0.083	0.197	1.245	0.214
	CF12	0.197	0.068	0.409	2.899	0.004
	CF13	-0.034	0.065	-0.072	-.524	0.600

a. Dependent Variable: Inclusive education policy

R = .450

R<sup>2</sup> = .202

Adj. R = .180

P<.05

teachers of inclusive learners, followed by 35.4% were counselors at school and 11.9% relatives of inclusive learners.

### The effect of Cultural factors on inclusive education policy implementation

The second objective seeks to examine the influence of cultural factors on inclusive education policy implementation. To determine this, each of the thirteen (13) cultural factors was regressed against inclusive education policy implementation and the level of significance was established at  $p < .05$ . The analysis of variance in (Table 4) shows that a 45%-unit change in cultural factors contributes to 20.2% positive significant influence on inclusive education policy implementation ( $R = .450$ ,  $R^2 = .202$ ,  $P < .05$ ). Further still, out of the thirteen cultural factors, six significantly reflects how culture influences inclusive education policy implementation. These are Learners without visual impairment do not pick inappropriate behavior from peers with visual impairment-CF1( $B = .207$ ;  $Beta = .353$ ;  $P = .000$ ). This means that 20.7% of the positive influence towards inclusive policy education implementation is attributed to good behaviors of learners with disabilities and their counterparts, the able-bodied. Chi square statistics showed that with varying degree of freedom, the socio-demographic characteristics were influential in explaining variations in responses given as follows:

Age category( $x^2 = 284.021$ ;  $df = 9$ ;  $P = .000$ ), Experience( $x^2 = 128.824$ ;  $df = 6$ ;  $P = .000$ ), Nature of disability( $x^2 = 348.306$ ;  $df = 9$ ;  $P = .000$ ), gender ( $x^2 = 244.968$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $P = .000$ ),and responsibility

towards the one with disability ( $x^2 = 355.434$ ;  $df = 6$ ;  $P = .000$ ). Positive attitude towards each other was another mentioned or notable factor explaining the effect of cultural factors on implementation of inclusive education policy. By ensuring this, it benefits special children through improvements in their learning outcomes, including their social skills, academic achievement, and personal development. Results are in line with findings of Brude (2000) which also state that positive attitude towards each other helps to meet all the learning needs of the children within a community, and that it also promotes the initiation of mainstream school restructuring. Learners without visual impairment have positive attitudes towards friendship with their visually impaired classmates-CF2( $B = .158$ ;  $Beta = .285$ ;  $P = .007$ ), implying that 15.8% effect on implementation of inclusive education policy implementation is influenced by the positive attitude which able-bodied learners have towards their counterparts with disabilities. The results of chi square tests of significance for background information revealed that:

Age category ( $x^2 = 195.758$ ;  $df = 9$ ;  $P = .000$ ), Experience ( $x^2 = 90.987$ ;  $df = 6$ ;  $P = .000$ ), Nature of disability( $x^2 = 196.389$ ;  $df = 9$ ;  $P = .000$ ), gender ( $x^2 = 46.470$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $P = .000$ ),and responsibility towards the one with disability ( $x^2 = 196.484$ ;  $df = 6$ ;  $P = .000$ ).Therefore, all the socio-demographic characteristics have significant statistical implication on the variations in results obtained. In general, inclusive schools are characterized by strong emphasis on quality instruction as well as administrative leadership; emphasis on the student's acquisition of basic

abilities; high levels of expectations for students as well as confidence in teachers' ability to deal and support the individual needs of their students; obligation to give a balanced and broad coverage of curriculum experiences appropriate for all children; promotion of secured and orderly environment conducive for both teaching and learning; and close evaluation and monitoring of each student's learning progress

Further, stereotypes were reported to be non-existent in inclusive schools in Namutumba District- $CF9(B = .179; Beta = .384; P = .004)$ . In this case, lack of stereotypes contributes to 17.9% positive effect on the inclusive education policy implementation among primary schools in Namutumba District. The results of chi square tests of significance for background information revealed the following results: Age category ( $x^2 = 33.757; df = 9; P = .000$ ), Experience ( $x^2 = 117.422; df = 6; P = .000$ ), Nature of disability- $CF9(x^2 = 54.415; df = 9; P = .000)$ , gender ( $x^2 = 34.717; df = 3; P = .000$ ), and responsibility towards the one with disability ( $x^2 = 175.955; df = 6; P = .000$ ). Therefore, all the socio-demographic characteristics have significant statistical implication on the variations in results obtained. History is replete with examples of disabled people worldwide being ridiculed, killed, abandoned to die, or condemned to permanent exclusion in asylums and ridiculed. This is justified by results according to Coulter, Bacon, and Birenbaum (2005)'s tracing through history the killing of people with disabilities, beginning with the Spartans who killed disabled persons as a matter of law; the endorsement by Martin Luther to kill disabled babies because they were 'incarnations of the devil'; the English eugenicists who eliminated disabled people under the Darwinian evolution theory of the 'survival of the fittest' and the Nazi Euthanasia Programme under Hitler to exterminate disabled people as they could not make any contribution to society.

The study also found out that there is a partnership between staff and parents/careers of inclusive learners in Namutumba District- $CF12(B = .377; Beta = .755; P = .000)$ . This implies that 37.7% of the positive changes which occur during the implementation of inclusive education policy implementation are explained by the strong relationship which exists between staff and parents of children with disabilities. Chi square results show that:

Age category ( $x^2 = 84.743; df = 9; P = .000$ ), Experience ( $x^2 = 33.871; df = 4; P = .000$ ), Nature of disability ( $x^2 = 101.255; df = 9; P = .000$ ), gender ( $x^2 = 79.284; df = 2; P = .000$ ), and responsibility towards the one with disability ( $x^2 = 94.014; df = 4; P = .000$ ). Therefore, all the aspects of the socio-demographic characteristics were significant in explaining variations in findings obtained. In other areas, this is not the case whereby children requiring special educational needs (SEN) are segregated

into separate learning environments. While this education practice has been established for years, other educators and analysts have been questioning its efficacy. Most of them suggest that students with SEN should be included into mainstream schools to maximize their learning experiences. Several other benefits as well as issues have been raised in relation to this educational issue. In this paper, the factors related to the education and inclusion of students with SEN, including the curriculum, attitude of the educators, professional development, equality issues as well as learning experiences, will be discussed as noted by Banville and Rikarad (2001). The significance and relevant effects of these factors will be the basis of the conclusion of this paper on whether inclusion should be adapted.

## Conclusion

The study concluded that cultural factors have a significant statistical influence on inclusive education policy implementation. Six factors were highlighted: learners without visual impairment do not pick inappropriate behavior from visually impaired peers, learners without visual impairment have positive attitudes toward friendship with visually impaired classmates, stereotypes were reported to be non-existent in inclusive schools in Namutumba District, and peer attitude was reported to have a significant positive influence on the implementation of inclusive education policies.

## Recommendations

Apparently, there is no steady link between schools and the Ministry of Education and Sports concerning inclusive education since there are no district administrators in charge special needs. On this note, the government should employ specialists to be in charge special needs at district levels, and act as a link between schools and the ministry. The public should be encouraged to join special needs education courses to increase on the number of inclusive education teachers and instructors in primary schools and technical schools respectively. There is need to have strong leadership to make inclusive practices a reality in schools. These leaders must have adequate knowledge of what inclusive practices entail and how to mobilize staff so those practices are effectively implemented. If inclusive practices are to be implemented appropriately, staff members must receive professional development on the models of inclusive practices (i.e., Co-teaching, Consultancy, Para-educator) and how to implement them. There must be a collaborative effort between community, parents, and the school to ensure that learners with disabilities do not encounter any form of discrimination at whatever cost. This will enable them live a positive life and aim higher in their academics. District leadership should come up with initiatives to periodically

collect and analyze data on children with special needs with particular emphasis on distribution of trained teachers in the area of special needs. Training institutions should make it a point that all teachers are trained in the area of special needs to bridge the gap of lack of teachers for special needs. Because positive interdependence plays a significant role in enhancing collaborative teaching, the following steps should be taken to avoid learners acting alone or to prevent them from avoiding group work.

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